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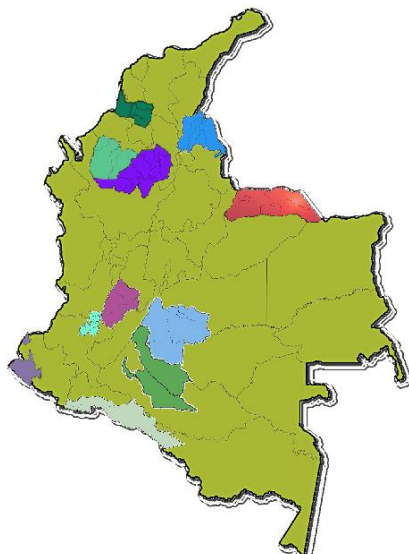
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

E-Bulletin

The Consolidation Index, a High-Impact Management Tool for Measuring the Results of the National Consolidation Policy



Equipment granted by the Consolidation Unit to the municipality of Puerto Asís for infrastructure construction
Photo: <http://hsbnoticias.com/vernoticia.asp?wplaca=33505>



Consolidation Zones Map
Source: Consolidation Unit

The new Consolidation Index mechanism will play a catalytic role in measuring progress effectively.

The Government of Colombia's (GOC) National Territorial Consolidation Policy (PNCT) aims to overcome the root causes of the internal armed conflict in Colombia, and to establish State presence in the 58 most vulnerable municipalities affected by violence, extreme poverty, and drug trafficking.

The USAID Public Policy Program has provided technical assistance for the design of the National Consolidation Plan (NCP) since its inception. Part of this support has been the design of the **Consolidation Index** that will be used to perform several measurements over time to monitor and compare the progress made in the target municipalities. This will enable the GOC to assign specific goals for each indicator and to verify their periodic performance. Even more importantly, it will serve as a critical tool for objectively analyzing the effectiveness of the public investments made under each Policy component within each of these municipalities, as well as for providing data about the overall results achieved by the Policy.

This innovative mechanism aggregates 37 indicators and allows the GOC to comprehensively monitor the results of the investments made under all of the components of the National Territorial Consolidation Policy: a) security; b) justice; c) human rights; d) property rights; e) good governance and the fight against corruption; f) citizen participation; g) creation of social capital; h) connectivity; i) public services; and j) economic growth.

In addition, the Consolidation Index constitutes a technical management tool that will transform the development of the National Territorial Consolidation Policy. Moreover, the Consolidation Unit now has a tool that allows it to determine and evaluate the results of its actions in each target zone. This tool provides valuable information that can be used to make decisions about how to restructure plans and programs, as well as how to best direct invested resources toward the fulfillment of proposed objectives.

No less important is the fact that the Index will provide the Consolidation Unit with technical criteria with which it can untangle and understand the interconnected nature of problems in each zone.

Data generated by the Index will also allow the State to define the priorities to be addressed in each municipality. At the same time, the Index will enable the Consolidation Unit to perform a complete cost-benefit analysis in order to determine the efficiency of each public investment. This will, in turn, permit the Unit to understand whether individual investments have produced their expected impact. Finally, the Index will assist the Colombian government in defining the criteria for the inclusion of new municipalities in consolidation zones, and in establishing the conditions for removing a municipality from the coverage of the National Territorial Consolidation Policy once the expected results have been achieved in that area.

The GOC's Territorial Consolidation Unit (TCU) is the lead agency responsible for the execution of the Policy and coordinates a substantial annual investment of US\$ 83 million. With these resources, the State is able to achieve three major goals: maintain security conditions and strengthen the presence of state institutions in consolidation municipalities; create sustainable conditions to transform the quality of life of the municipalities' inhabitants; and restore confidence in government actions and the rule of law. To reverse the effects of years of underdevelopment, it is important for the State to construct the necessary infrastructure to provide quality public services, as well as offer incentives that stimulate economic development and promote access to markets.

The Government's ability to measure the progress of the National Territorial Consolidation Policy has been quite limited thus far, because it relies on only one instrument for doing so – a traffic light mechanism that classifies the security situation as “red,” “yellow” or “green.” Although useful for evaluating security conditions, this tool is insufficient because it does not account for the progress made towards all Policy goals, and fails to measure indicators that are crucial to guaranteeing a sustainable peace over the long term. The new Consolidation Index mechanism will play a catalytic role in measuring progress effectively.

The effectiveness of the Consolidation Index is being tested through pilot programs in three consolidation municipalities – Montelíbano (Córdoba), San Juan de Arama (Meta) and Tumaco (Nariño). These pilot programs are close to completion. Information has been collected on 21 of the 37 indicators of the Index. For the first time, real information exists with which to determine the evolution and results of the consolidation process in these municipalities.

It must be noted, however, that implementing the **Consolidation Index** poses significant challenges for the Colombian government. The three pilot programs being conducted demonstrate the need to enhance the current indicators with additional strategic information in the future. Pilot program results suggest that collecting measurements of the following criteria would provide a clearer picture of the situation in each municipality: a) illegal mining; b) coca-free territories; c) illegal drug trafficking routes; d) progress towards the implementation of the Local Justice Coordination System; e) extortion and kidnapping complaints; f) land use and occupancy baselines; g) the number of judicially-resolved land restitution cases; h) forced recruitment by illegal armed groups; i) profile and status of victims; j) schooling and dropout rates; and k) levels of access to financial services.

The indicators that comprise the **Consolidation Index** are primarily inputs taken from existing databases. The pilot programs have indicated the advisability of conducting complementary focus groups in order to learn about how citizens in the consolidation municipalities perceive the evolution and impact of the Consolidation Policy.

The **Consolidation Index** will be implemented in the 9 current consolidation zones and in all target municipalities in the coming months. This represents a decisive advance in the government's ability to monitor the results of the National Territorial Consolidation Policy, and a crucial tool for making appropriate decisions that are essential for the creation of effective conditions for peace in Colombia.